



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

[Docket #: RBS-22-BUSINESS-0019]

Notice of Solicitation of Applications for Inviting Applications for the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program for Fiscal Year 2023

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (Agency), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development (RD), is making an initial announcement to invite applications for loans and grants under the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP) for fiscal year (FY) 2023, subject to the availability of funding. This notice is being issued prior to the passage of a FY 23 Appropriations Act, which may or may not provide funding for this program, in order to allow applicants sufficient time to leverage financing, prepare and submit their applications, and give the Agency time to process applications within FY23. Successful applications will be selected by the Agency for funding and subsequently awarded to the extent that funding may ultimately be made available through appropriations. RMAP provides the following types of support: loan only, combination loan and technical assistance grant, and subsequent technical assistance grants to Microenterprise Development Organizations (MDO). An announcement will be made on the Agency Web site: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/federal-funding-opportunities> regarding any amount received in the FY23 appropriations. All applicants are responsible for any expenses incurred in developing their applications or any costs incurred prior to the obligation date.

DATES: The deadlines for completed applications to be received in the USDA RD State Office for quarterly funding competitions are no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on: First Quarter, September 30, 2022; Second Quarter, December 31, 2022; Third Quarter, March 31, 2023; and Fourth Quarter, June 30, 2023. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, the application is due the next business day.

The subsequent microlender technical assistance grant (existing MDOs with a microentrepreneur revolving loan fund) will be made, non-competitively, based on the microlender's microlending activity and availability of funds. To determine the microlender technical assistance grant awards for FY23, if available, the Agency will use the microlender's outstanding balance of microloans as of June 30, 2023, to calculate the eligible grant amount. MDOs that are in compliance with the terms of their loan agreement may apply for this annual grant.

ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted electronically to the USDA RD State Office for the state where the project is located. Applicants are encouraged to contact their respective RD State Office for an email contact to submit an electronic application prior to the submission deadline date(s). A list of the USDA RD State Office contacts can be found at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.

This funding opportunity will be made available for informational purposes on www.grants.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shamika Johnson at shamika.johnson@usda.gov, Program Management Division, Business Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mail Stop 3226, Room 5160-S, Washington, D.C. 20250-3226, or call (202) 720-1400. For further information on this notice, please contact the USDA RD State Office in the State in which the applicant's headquarters is located. A list of RD State

Office contacts is provided at the following link: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Federal Agency Name: Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Funding Opportunity Title: Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program.

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement.

Assistance Listing (formally Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number):
10.870.

Funding Opportunity Number (grants.gov): RD-RBCS-23-RMAP

Dates: The deadlines for completed applications to be received in the USDA RD State Office for quarterly funding competitions are no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on: First Quarter, September 30, 2022; Second Quarter, December 31, 2022; Third Quarter, March 31, 2023, and Fourth Quarter, June 30, 2023.

Administrative: If two or more applications have the same score and funds are not available to fund both projects, the Administrator may prioritize applications to help the program achieve overall geographic diversity.

The Agency encourages applicants to consider projects that will advance the following key priorities:

- Assisting rural communities recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure;
- Ensuring all rural residents have equitable access to RD programs and benefits from RD funded projects; and
- Reducing climate pollution and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.

More details on the key priorities may be found at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/priority-points>.

I. Program Description

(a) *Purpose of the Program.* The purpose of RMAP is to support the development and ongoing success of rural Microentrepreneurs and Microenterprises, each as defined in 7 CFR 4280.302. The regulation can be accessed online at <https://www.ecfr.gov>. To accomplish this purpose, RMAP provides direct loans and grants to MDOs. Loan funds are used by the MDO to establish or recapitalize a revolving loan program for making microloans to a rural microentrepreneur business. Grant funds are used by the MDO to provide technical assistance and entrepreneurship training to rural individuals and businesses.

(b) *Statutory Authority.* RMAP is authorized by section 379E of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (Public Law 87-128), as amended, and is codified as 7 U.S.C. 2008s. Regulations are contained in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart D and can be found online at <https://www.ecfr.gov>. Assistance provided to rural areas under this program may include the provision of loans and grants to rural MDOs for the provision of microloans to rural microenterprises and microentrepreneurs; provision of business-based training and technical assistance to rural microborrowers and potential microborrowers; and other such activities as deemed appropriate by the Secretary to ensure the development and ongoing success of rural microenterprises. Awards are made on a competitive basis using specific selection criteria contained in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart D.

(c) *Definition of Terms.* The definitions applicable to this notice are published at 7 CFR 4280.302.

(d) *Application Awards.* The Agency will review, evaluate, and score applications received in response to this notice based on the provisions found in 7 CFR

part 4280, subpart D, and as indicated in this notice. However, the Agency advises all interested parties that the applicant bears the burden in preparing and submitting an application in response to this notice whether or not funding is appropriated for this program in FY 2023. Information required to be in the application is specified in 7 CFR 4280.315. For entities applying for program loan funds to become an RMAP microlender only, the following items are also required: (1) Form RD 1910-11, “Applicant Certification Federal Collection Policies for Consumer or Commercial Debts,” available at

<https://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov/efcommon/eFileServices/eForms/RD1910-11.PDF>;

(2) Demonstration that the applicant is eligible to apply to participate in this program; and
(3) Certification by the applicant that it cannot obtain sufficient credit elsewhere to fund the activities called for under this program with similar rates and terms.

Current MDO entities may be eligible for subsequent annual microlender technical assistance grants that are awarded subject to funding availability and determined non-competitively based on Agency appropriations for the fiscal year. The MDO must submit a prescribed worksheet, listing the outstanding balance of their microloans and unexpended grant funds as of June 30, 2023, and a letter certifying that their organization still meets all the requirements set forth in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart D, and that no significant changes have occurred within the last year that would affect its ability to carry out the MDO functions. In addition, all MDOs who request Subsequent Annual Microlender Technical Assistance Grants must complete their reporting into the Lenders Interactive Network Connection (LINC) for the Federal fiscal quarter ending June 30, 2023 which will verify the outstanding balance of their microloans as stated in their request for grant funds. The deadline for reporting into LINC and requesting a technical assistance grant is no later than 4:30 p.m. (Eastern time) on August 1, 2023.

II. Federal Award Information

Type of Awards: Loans and/or Grants.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2023.

Available Funds. Anyone interested in submitting an application for funding under these Programs is encouraged to consult the RD Notices of Solicitation of Applications web site at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/newsroom/federal-funding-opportunities>.

Maximum Award: The Agency anticipates the following maximum amounts per award: Loans - \$500,000; Grants - \$100,000.

Application Funding Competition Dates: First Quarter, September 30, 2022; Second Quarter, December 31, 2022; Third Quarter, March 31, 2023 and Fourth Quarter, June 30, 2023.

III. Eligibility Information

(a) *Eligible Applicants.* Eligible applicants are domestic organizations that are non-profit entities, Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 5304 (c)) or public institutions of higher education. Eligible applicants must provide training and technical assistance, make microloans, facilitate access to capital, or have an effective plan or program to deliver such services. The applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in 7 CFR 4280.310 and must not be delinquent on any Federal debt or otherwise disqualified from participation in this program to be eligible to apply. The Agency will check the System for Award Management (SAM) to determine if the applicant has been debarred or suspended at the time of application and also prior to funding any grant award. All other restrictions in this notice will apply.

(b) *Cost Sharing or Matching.* The Federal share of the eligible project cost of a microborrower's project funded under this notice shall not exceed 75 percent. The cost

share requirement shall be met by the microlender in accordance with the requirements specified in 7 CFR 4280.311(d).

The MDO is required to provide a match of not less than 15 percent of the total amount of the grant in the form of matching funds, indirect costs, or in-kind goods or services.

(c) *Other Eligibility Requirements.* Applications will only be accepted from eligible MDOs. Eligible MDOs must score a minimum of 60 points out of 100 points to be considered to receive an award. Applicable scoring criteria is described in 7 CFR 4280.316. Awards for each Federal fiscal quarter will be based on ranking with the highest-scoring applications being funded first, subject to available funding.

(d) *Completeness Eligibility.* All applications must be submitted as a complete application, in one package. Applications will not be considered for funding if they do not provide sufficient information to determine eligibility or are otherwise not suitable for evaluation. Such applications will be withdrawn and not considered for funding.

IV. Application and Submission Information

(a) *Address to Request Application Package.* For further information, entities wishing to apply for assistance should contact the RD State Office as identified in the ADDRESSES section of this notice to obtain an electronic copy of the application package.

An MDO may submit an initial application for a loan with a microlender technical assistance grant, or an initial or subsequent loan-only (without a microlender technical assistance grant). Loan applications must be submitted electronically to the State Office where the project is located and must be organized in the same order set forth in 7 CFR 4280.315. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their respective RD State Office for an email contact to submit an electronic application prior to the submission deadline date(s).

(b) *Content and Form of Application Submission.* An application must contain all of the required elements outlined in 7 CFR 4280.315. Each application must address the applicable scoring criteria presented in 7 CFR 4280.316 for the type of funding being requested.

(c) *System for Award Management and Unique Entity Identifier.*

(i) At the time of application, each applicant must have an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application in accordance with 2 CFR part 25. In order to register in SAM, entities will be required to create a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Instructions for obtaining the UEI are available at <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

(ii) Applicants must maintain an active SAM registration, with current, accurate and complete information, at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

(iii) Applicants must ensure they complete the Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations in SAM.

(iv) Applicants must provide a valid UEI in its application, unless determined exempt under 2 CFR 25.110.

(v) The Agency will not make an award until the applicant has complied with all SAM requirements including providing the UEI. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Agency is ready to make an award, the Agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

The Agency will not make an award until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Agency is ready to make an award, the agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that

determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

(d) *Submission Dates and Times.* Competitions for the available loan and grant funds will be made quarterly for applications that are received no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on: First Quarter, September 30, 2022; Second Quarter, December 31, 2022; Third Quarter, March 31, 2023; and Fourth Quarter, June 30, 2023.

Unless withdrawn by the applicant, completed applications that receive a score of at least 60 (the minimum required to be considered for funding) but have not yet been funded, will be retained by the Agency for consideration in subsequent reviews through a total of four consecutive quarterly reviews. Applications that remain unfunded after four quarterly reviews, including the initial quarter in which the application was competed, will not be considered further for an award.

(e) *Explanation of Dates.* Applications must be in the USDA RD State Office by the dates and times as indicated above to compete for available funds in that fiscal quarter. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, the application is due the next business day.

(f) *Intergovernmental Review.* This program is subject to Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Intergovernmental consultation will occur for the assistance to MDOs in accordance with the process and procedures outlined in 2 CFR part 415, subpart C. Assistance to rural microenterprises will not require intergovernmental review. Applications from Federally recognized Indian tribes are not subject to this requirement.

Rural Development will conduct intergovernmental consultation using RD Instruction 1970-I "Intergovernmental Review," available in any RD office, on the Internet at <http://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/1970i.pdf> and in 2 CFR part 415, subpart C. Note that not all States have chosen to participate in the intergovernmental review process. A list of participating States is available at the following Web site:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/management/office-federal-financial-management/>.

(g) *Funding Restrictions.* No funds made available under this notice shall be used for those ineligible purposes outlined in 7 CFR 4280.313(e).

V. Application Review Information

(a) *Criteria.* All eligible and complete applications for new loan and grant funds will be evaluated and scored based on the selection criteria and weights contained in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart D. A copy of the regulation can be accessed online at <https://www.ecfr.gov>. Failure to address any one of the criteria by the application deadline will result in the application being determined ineligible and the application will not be considered for funding. An application must receive at least 60 points in the scoring criteria stated in 7 CFR 4280.316 to be considered for funding in the quarter in which it is scored.

(b) *Review and Selection Process.* The State Offices will review applications to determine if they are eligible for assistance based on requirements contained in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart D. If determined eligible, the application will be submitted to the National Office, where it will be reviewed and prioritized by ranking each application received in that quarter, from highest to lowest score order. All applications will be funded from the highest to lowest score until funds have been exhausted for each funding cycle. Funding of projects is subject to the MDO's satisfactory submission of the additional items required by that subpart and the USDA RD Letter of Conditions.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

(a) *Award Notices.* Successful applicants will receive notification for funding from the USDA RD State Office. Applicants must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations before the award will be approved. Provided the application and eligibility requirements have not changed, an application not selected will be reconsidered for three subsequent funding competitions for a total of four competitions.

If an application is withdrawn, it can be resubmitted and will be evaluated as a new application. Unsuccessful applications will receive notification by mail, detailing why the application was unsuccessful.

(b) *Administrative and National Policy Requirements.* Additional requirements that apply to MDOs selected for this program can be found in 7 CFR part 4280, subpart D. The USDA and the Agency have adopted the USDA grant regulations at 2 CFR chapter IV. This regulation incorporates the new Office of Management and Budget regulations 2 CFR part 200 and 2 CFR part 400 for monitoring and servicing RMAP funding.

(c) *National Environmental Policy Act.* All recipients under this Notice are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 1970.

(d) *Reporting.* In addition to any reports required by 2 CFR part 200 and 2 CFR part 400, the MDO must provide reports as required by 7 CFR part 4280, subpart D. All recipients of Federal financial assistance are required to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation (see 2 CFR part 170). You will be required to have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109-282) reporting requirements (see 2 CFR 170.200(b), unless you are exempt under 2 CFR 170.110(b)).

Intermediaries must collect and maintain data provided by Ultimate Recipients on race, sex, and national origin and must also ensure that Ultimate Recipients collect and maintain this data. Race and ethnicity data will be collected in accordance with OMB Federal Register notice, “Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity” (62 FR 58782), October 30, 1997. Sex data will be collected in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. These items should not be submitted with the application but should be available upon request by the Agency.

The applicant and the Ultimate Recipients must comply with Title VI of the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Executive Order 12250, Executive Order 13166 Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and 7 CFR part 1901, subpart E.

VII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For general questions about this notice, please contact your USDA RD State Office as provided in the ADDRESSES section of this notice.

VIII. Buy America

Awards under this announcement for Infrastructure projects to Non-Federal entities, defined pursuant to 2 CFR 200.1 as any State, local government, Indian tribe, Institution of Higher Education, or nonprofit organization, shall be governed by the requirements of Section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act (BABA) within the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and its implementing regulations. Recipients of an award of Federal financial assistance from a program for infrastructure are hereby notified that none of the funds provided under this award may be used for a project for infrastructure unless:

- (1) All iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States.

This means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States.

- (2) All manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States. This means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States, and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation.

(3) All construction materials (excludes cement and cementitious materials, aggregates such as stone, sand, or gravel, or aggregate binding agents or additives) are manufactured in the United States. This means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States.

The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project, but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

IV. Paperwork Reduction Act

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the information collection requirements associated with RMAP, as covered in this notice, have been approved by OMB under OMB Control Number 0570–0062.

V. Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded

by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-program-discrimination-complaint-form.pdf> from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Karama Neal,
Administrator,
Rural Business-Cooperative Service,
USDA Rural Development.

[FR Doc. 2022-18779 Filed: 8/30/2022 8:45 am; Publication Date: 8/31/2022]